

## **SOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES IN OLONGAPO CITY, PHILIPPINES: BASIS FOR LOCALIZED POVERTY ALLEVIATION INTERVENTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study determined the social functioning status of families who belong to the most impoverished sectors of our society. Following the premise that poverty alleviation shall be effective only when it addresses key factors affecting social functioning. This study offered suggestions as to what human aspects should be strengthened that may eventually lead to a person's enhanced social functioning. The study aimed to highlight the necessity of poverty alleviation programs that are inclined towards a more holistic approach for social development, a program which does not only combat poverty by addressing expressed economic need but also restores people's capacities to confront their own social realities.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Social Functioning, Perceived Needs, Impoverished Families, Poverty Alleviation Intervention*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Rationale**

The Philippines remains to be an impoverished country, as far as the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) report is concerned. In April 2013, NSCB reported that the country's poverty incidence stood at 297.9% in the first semester of 2012, virtually unchanged from the same period in 2006 and 2009. The report shows that 28 out of 100 Filipinos are still living below the poverty line. (National Statistical Coordination Board Poverty Situation 2013)

With such a huge challenge to development due to the intergenerational problem of poverty, the national government has come up with several means to address the situation, among them the DSWD-implemented core programs such as the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS), Self Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEAK) and the government's flagship poverty alleviation program: Pantawid Pamilya (formerly Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or 4Ps). These programs, together with numerous other mechanisms, are implemented by government and private agencies alike, to address the inter-generational problem of poverty, however, with such a gargantuan task ahead, the guarantee of having a poverty-free county is far from being achieved.

To effectively alleviate the poverty situation in the country, the government has to identify first who are the legitimate poor who should be the first and foremost recipient of anti-poverty intervention programs. Hence, the Department of Social Welfare and Development came up with a data management tool called the National

Housing Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR). It aims to identify who and where the poor are in the country and to serve as a response mechanism that guarantees that the poor are able to avail of the benefits of social protection programs. Through the NHTS-PR, the government can allow for efficient allocation of government resources and services for the poor through the formulation of common criteria for the selection of the poorest population and improved coordination among Social Protection Agencies. The efforts in identifying poor households using the NHTS-PR tool began in 2009.

Olongapo City is a first class, highly urbanized city located in the province of Zambales. The city, which is the focus of this research, was subjected to the NHTS-PR in 2011 and of the 5,480 assessed households, the NHTS revealed that a total of 2,749 households are actually living below the poverty line (NHTS Magnitude of Assessed and Poor Households in Olongapo City as of July 2011). This data proved useful for the national government and the DSWD in prioritizing the beneficiaries from Olongapo City for the poverty alleviation program implemented by the national government. But since poverty is a multi-faceted issue that requires intervention both from the national government and their local counterparts, this data is all the more valuable for the city administrators in identifying who should be the primary recipient of localized poverty alleviation intervention in the city.

Since poverty is an intergenerational problem, the government needs to take a role in creating conditions that promote individual development and prevent social problems. In other words, the government has to institutionalize these poverty alleviation initiatives through the creation of fundamental social welfare policies that will continually address poverty in the country in the years to come. Social welfare policy refers to both goals of collective responsibilities and to a set of services for carrying out those responsibilities. These are set of laws and administrative rules that define the purposes of public social welfare and authorize organizations to work toward the accomplishment of these purposes. (Compton, Galaway, Cournoyer 2004). According to Blau (2010) however, social welfare policies should seek to enhance the social functioning and well-being of individuals and families.

Social functioning on the other hand, refers to the interaction between the individual and his situation or environment. Social functioning is what results from the interaction between the two forces: the individual's coping capacities and the demands of his situation/environment. Social workers are the professionals hired as key implementers of poverty alleviation programs, both by the government and private organizations alike. The social worker's "job assignment" involves "mediating" (Schwartz 1961), or "matching" (Gordon 1969), or striking a balance between people's coping ability and situational/environmental demands (Barlett 1970). Social functioning is the focus of social work, therefore any social welfare intervention provided to any individual and families in need should consider social functioning in planning a more responsive intervention to produce intended results.

The Heimler Theory (of human social functioning) is based on the principle that frustration is the potential for human flourishing. This approach was first developed by Eugene Heimler, a social worker based in London, in the 1950s when he worked with the unemployed in England and discovered that not only does the past influence the present, but present actions determine what we choose to remember from the past. The approach is both action and reality oriented. According to Heimler, success or failure to function within our private lives and in society depends upon the balance between satisfaction, defined as the ability to use one's potential, and frustration, defined as one's inability to use that potential. Heimler's principles include the importance of the relationship between satisfaction and frustration. He observed that "those who functioned in society has the common feature of a subjectively felt satisfaction that corresponded with

their level of bearable frustration”. Too much frustration or too little satisfaction is detrimental to good functioning for an individual. The person’s life experience is valued and used as a resource for healing in addition to recognizing where the energy is distributed. This enables the person to make changes that will allow the more positive use of energy.

This study is anchored on the basic framework, principles, and objectives applied using the Heimler Method of social functioning. In the analysis of data, the variables identified were evaluated systematically so as to make the findings reliable.

This research determined the current social functioning status of poor households by looking at several aspects such as home and family life, parenting, finance, social relations, personal, energy, health, environmental interactions, habits, and their outlook in life.

The learning from this study will be useful in developing an appropriate localized intervention for poverty alleviation by taking into consideration the current social functioning status of impoverished household and through the identification of the different human aspects that need to be addressed by these interventions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling**

The respondents were selected through random sampling. The study involved a total of 200 head of households selected from families who were identified as living below the poverty threshold or simply categorized as “poor” by the National Housing Targeting System conducted by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) in 2010, all residing within the jurisdictional bound of Olongapo city. The respondents were selected from each selected families from the 17 barangays to represent the sample population for this study. Only 200 individuals were selected for this study and were selected irregardless of their membership with any program for poverty alleviation. Each of the selected respondents was contacted through home visits.

### **Instrument**

The researcher made use of a survey questionnaire adopted and revised from the Heimler Scale of Social Functioning. The instrument was modified to suit the Philippine context and incorporated the need for data pertinent to this research. The modified instrument is composed of three (3) parts. The first part focused on the profile of the respondents. The second part inquired about the social functioning status of the respondents which can be described in terms of home and family life, parenting, finance, social relations, personal, energy, health, environmental interactions, habits, and their present outlook in life. The third part determined the perceived needs of poor families in terms of intervention that may address their needs and eventually contribute to the enhancement of their social functioning.

### **Data Gathering**

All data gathered through the questionnaire were tallied, tabulated analyzed and interpreted accordingly. The questionnaire was adopted and modified from Heimler’s Scale of Social Functioning. Frequency and percentage distribution are used to describe the profile of the respondents, and the weighted mean is utilized to assess the social functioning data. The Likert Scale was used to interpret items in the questionnaire. Person Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson-r) is used to determine the significant relationships between the factors considered in this research and the social functioning status of the respondents.

## RESULTS

The findings from this study revealed that the heads of poor households in Olongapo city were typically high school graduates, currently unemployed, with a combined family income between PhP1,000 to PhP5,000. Majority of the poor families in Olongapo were members of the Pantawid Pamilya Program (4Ps) for 5-6 years now. As a result, these families feel they are living more financially secured now than 3 years ago. No family claimed to have received any other formal assistance on poverty alleviation from the local government or from any other private organization. The emotional/psychological needs of poor parents were also not addressed. Despite feeling tired to enjoy life and being depressed at times due to their condition, the majority of the respondents still maintain a positive outlook in life. The respondents were generally concerned about the health of their family, hence, health and nutritional assistance is the most urgent intervention they require at this time. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the social functioning status of the poor families, as well as their perceived needs when grouped according to profile variables. On the other hand, a significant relationship exists between social functioning and the perceived needs of poor families.

**Table 1: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Home and Family Life**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I would like my family to turn to me when they have problems.	4.46	Agree
2	I am really satisfied with my family life.	4.04	Agree
3	I discuss my family problems with other members of the family.	4.22	Agree
4	Taking care of my family is a burden for me.	1.68	Disagree
5	My family life is problematic at the moment	2.70	Uncertain
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.42</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>

Table 1 presents the Social Functioning Status of the respondents in terms of Home and Family Life. The overall mean of 3.42 indicates that the respondents are Uncertain about conditions pertaining to their Home and Family Life.

**Table 2: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Parenting**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I can adequately look after my children.	4.50	Agree
2	I enjoy taking care of my children	4.65	Strongly Agree
3	I can understand how my children feel	4.62	Strongly Agree
4	I feel that i have help in upbringing our children	4.40	Agree
5	My emotional needs as a parent are not being met.	4.23	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.48</b>	<b>Agree</b>

This study also inquired about the perception of the respondents as regards parental responsibilities. The respondents Strongly Agree that though parenting can be burdensome at times, it is still an enjoyable thing to do.

**Table 3: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Finance**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I live more comfortably now than 3 years ago.	4.05	Agree
2	I am able to save money.	2.85	Uncertain
3	I can feel that the family is reasonably secured financially.	3.34	Uncertain
4	I can manage our household money so I am at ease when spending.	3.81	Agree
5	I believe I can find other means of income for the family	3.93	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.60</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data revealed that the respondents live more comfortably now than 3 years ago. This is due to the fact that the majority of them are a recipient of government cash assistance for poverty alleviation.

**Table 4: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Social Relations**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I have close friends whom I can confide with.	4.02	Agree
2	Outside of my family, I do feel that there are people who care about me.	3.99	Agree
3	I enjoy making new friends.	4.31	Agree
4	I like my friends to turn to me when they have problems.	4.25	Agree
5	I like to entertain people and make them happy.	4.38	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.19</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data validated that the respondents like to entertain people and make them happy and that they also enjoy making friends. A global study in 2014 by UM has confirmed that the Filipinos are the most sociable people in the world.

**Table 5: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Personal Experiences**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I feel happy when I recall my childhood days.	4.59	Strongly Agree
2	My childhood was a good preparation for adult life.	4.25	Agree
3	I am at times very depressed.	4.26	Agree
4	I sometimes wish that I am dead.	2.26	Disagree
5	I find people are at times unappreciative of my effort.	2.88	Uncertain
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.65</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Notably, most of the respondents disclosed that they feel happy when they recall their childhood days. However, a remarkable number of respondents agree that they are at times feeling very depressed.

**Table 6: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Energy**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I feel overworked.	3.44	Uncertain
2	I feel too tired to work.	2.73	Uncertain
3	I feel that my mind is not too active.	2.97	Uncertain
4	I feel too tired to enjoy life.	2.81	Uncertain
5	I feel frustrated because I am prevented from doing things properly.	3.18	Uncertain
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.03</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>

As observed from Table 6, the social functioning status of the respondents in terms of energy indicates that they are mostly Uncertain in all the provided indicators.

**Table 7: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Health**

INDICATOR		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE RATING
1	I care about proper hygiene.	3.72	Agree
2	I care about how others look at me physically.	3.14	Uncertain
3	I suffer from other pains in my body.	4.04	Agree
4	I am concerned about my personal health	4.30	Agree
5	I am concerned about the health of my family	4.44	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.93</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data show that the respondents are generally concerned about the health of their family but there are also those Uncertain whether they should care about how others look at them physically.

**Table 8: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Environmental Interactions**

Indicator		Mean	Descriptive Rating
1	I am often disappointed by people I trust.	2.74	Uncertain
2	I find that other people like it to be hurtful to me.	2.34	Disagree
3	I feel that circumstances are always against me.	2.73	Uncertain
4	I feel that some people are against me.	2.72	Uncertain
5	I life to have more power or influence over others.	1.85	Disagree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>2.48</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

The data indicate that the respondents Disagree about conditions relating to Environmental Interactions.

**Table 9: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Habits**

Indicator		Mean	Descriptive Rating
1	I have a vice.	2.07	Disagree
2	I am inclined to drink or smoke too much.	1.91	Disagree
3	I tend to get over-active and over excited.	3.22	Uncertain
4	I tend to eat too much or too little.	2.31	Disagree
5	I tend to do things that can cause trouble to my myself and to others.	2.02	Disagree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>2.31</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

Table 9 presents that the respondents tended to Disagree whether they have a vice and are not inclined to drink alcohol or smoke cigarette. On the questions of getting overactive or overexcited, they are undecided.

**Table 10: Social Functioning Status of the Respondents in Terms of Outlook in Life**

Indicator		Mean	Descriptive Rating
1	I feel that there are still plenty of things to achieve in life.	4.46	Agree
2	I feel that I have achieved my ambition in life already.	2.44	Disagree
3	I feel hopeful about my future.	4.36	Agree
4	I believe that my life has meaning.	4.52	Strongly Agree
5	When I look back, I feel that my life was worth all the struggle.	4.54	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.06</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Asked if they feel that their life was worth all the struggle, the respondents Strongly Agree, Agreeing that there are still plenty of things to achieve in life, but Disagreeing if they feel that they have achieved their ambition in life.

**Table 11: Perceived Needs of Poor Families**

Indicator		Mean	Descriptive Rating
1	Provision of food assistance or allowances for food.	4.43	Agree
2	Health and nutritional services.	4.58	Strongly Agree
3	Psychological service such as counseling and family therapies to address intra-familial conflict.	4.03	Agree
4	Values and spiritual formation activities.	4.39	Agree
5	Personality development trainings/workshops (such as leadership trainings, confidence building activities, family oriented activities, etc.	3.91	Agree
6	Stress debriefing through recreational activities (such as family outings, character building activities)	3.89	Agree
7	Employment assistance to be gainfully employed.	4.23	Agree
8	Livelihood and vocational skills training.	4.14	Agree
9	Capital and loan assistance for small business.	4.13	Agree
10	Financial management training to manage income and expenses.	4.42	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.21</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data collected showed that Health and Nutritional Services are the most favored intervention with most of the respondents agreeing that this is their most important need at this time.

**Table 12: Difference in the Social Functioning Status of Poor Families when Grouped According to the Profile Variables**

Profile		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Sig	Decision
Age	Between	0.145	5	0.029	0.303	0.911	Not Significant
	Within	18.618	194	0.096			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8.763</b>	<b>199</b>				
Civil Status	Between	0.475	4	0.119	1.267	0.284	Not Significant
	Within	18.288	19	0.094			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.763</b>	<b>199</b>				
Number of Dependent Children	Between	1.190	5	0.238	2.62	0.914	Not Significant
	Within	17.573	194	0.091			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.763</b>	<b>199</b>				
Highest Educational Attainment	Between	1.179	5	0.236	2.601	0.027	Significant
	Within	17.585	194	0.091			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.763</b>	<b>199</b>				
Current Employment Status	Between	0.038	2	0.019	0.201	0.818	Not Significant
	Within	18.725	197	0.095			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.763</b>	<b>199</b>				
Monthly Family Income	Between	0.872	5	0.156	1.687	0.139	Not Significant
	Within	17.981	194	0.093			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.763</b>	<b>199</b>				
<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>T Value</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Male	115	3.513	0.290	0.0002	0.006	0.995	Significant
Female	85	3.513	0.331				
<b>Membership</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>T value</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Yes	179	3.512	0.314	0.022	0.317	0.176	Not Significant
No	21	3.493	0.241				

The data revealed that there is a significant difference in social functioning when respondents are grouped according to highest educational attainment and sex. While no significant difference in social functioning when grouped according to age, civil status, number of dependent children, current employment status, monthly family income, and membership to poverty alleviation programs.

**Table 13: Difference in the Perceived Needs of Poor Families when Grouped According to Profile Variables**

Profile		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Sig	Decision
Age	Between	2.401	5	0.480	0.778	0.567	Not Significant
	Within	119.807	194	0.618			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122.208</b>	<b>199</b>				
Civil Status	Between	1.271	4	0.318	0.512	0.727	Not Significant
	Within	120.937	195	0.620			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122.208</b>	<b>199</b>				
Number of Dependent Children	Between	7.952	5	1.590	2.70	0.224	Not Significant
	Within	114.256	194	0.589			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122.208</b>	<b>199</b>				
Highest Educational Attainment	Between	4.140	5	0.828	1.361	0.241	Not Significant
	Within	118.068	194	0.609			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122.208</b>	<b>199</b>				
Current Employment Status	Between	5.817	2	2.908	4.923	0.008	Not Significant
	Within	116.391	197	0.591			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122.208</b>	<b>199</b>				
Monthly Family Income	Between	2.580	5	0.516	0.837	0.525	Significant
	Within	119.628	194	0.617			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122.208</b>	<b>199</b>				
Sex	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	T Value	Sig	Decision
Male	115	4.365	0.693	0.355	3.238	0.001	Significant
Female	85	4.011	0.854				
Membership	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	T value	Sig	Decision
Yes	179	4.235	0.775	0.192	1.061	0.290	Not Significant
No	21	4.043	0.858				

The data revealed that there is a significant difference in the perceived needs of poor families as to current employment status and sex. And that there is no significant difference in the perceived needs as to age, civil status, number of dependent children, highest educational attainment, monthly family income, and membership in poverty alleviation programs.

**Table 14: Relationship between Social Functioning Status & Perceived Needs of Poor Families**

Variable	Coefficient of Correlation (r)	Probability Value	Decision
Home & Family Life and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.145	0.041	Significant
Parenting and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.321	0.000	Significant
Finance and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.251	0.000	Significant
Social Relation and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.332	0.000	Significant
Personal and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.091	0.201	Not Significant
Energy and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	-0.122	0.086	Not Significant
Health and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.087	0.221	Not Significant
Environmental Interaction and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.005	0.949	Not Significant
Habits and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	-0.047	0.512	Not Significant
Outlook in Life and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.311	0.000	Significant
Social Functioning Status and Perceived Needs of Poor Families	0.271	0.000	Significant

Accordingly, a significant relationship exists between perceived needs and several aspects of social functioning namely Home and Family Life, Parenting, Finance, Social Relation and Outlook in Life. For Personal, Energy, Health, Environmental Interaction and Habits, no significant relationship exist. Altogether, the data provided that indeed, a



significant relationship exist between social functioning and the perceived needs of poor families.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The social functioning status of the respondents is described in terms of Home and Family Life, Parenting, Finance, Social Relations, Personal, Energy, Health, Environmental Interaction, Habit and Outlook in Life.

Majority of the respondents still maintain a positive outlook in life despite feeling tired to enjoy life and being depressed at times due to their condition. They were generally concerned about the health of their family, hence, health and nutritional assistance is the most urgent intervention they require at this time. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the social functioning status of the poor families, as well as their perceived needs when grouped according to profile variables. On the other hand, a significant relationship exists between social functioning and the perceived needs of poor families. The perceived needs of poor families are crucial indicators in determining the social functioning status of the respondents and these needs should likewise be considered in developing a holistic localized poverty alleviation program that is responsive to the needs of poor families in Olongapo City.

Most of the respondents agree that they would want their family members to turn to them when they have problems. The data stresses the strong sense of “*familism*” in the Philippines as a cultural phenomenon. However, Harrison and Huntington (2000) argued that cultural traditions in many parts of the world undermined the possibility of political and economic developments. They termed this as “*amoral familism*”, a strong sense of patronage and in-group resource allocation in which merit played little role, was a strong obstacle to development.

The parents find caring for their children as an enjoyable task. Sleek and Staff (1998) found in a research that “improved parenting can lead to better child outcomes, but only if other needs in the family’s life are also addressed”. In poor families, children could feel homelessness due to lack of parents’ attention because poverty and the factors associated with it are blocking the ways parents perform the role of good parenting.

Accordingly, the respondents live more comfortably now than 3 years ago. This is due to the fact that majority of them are recipient of government support for poverty alleviation. Although they are indefinite whether they are able to save money, their responses simply that they Agree mostly to questions posed as regards their Financial Status in relation to their social functioning. Poverty in the Philippines has both chronic and transient elements. According to the 2004 data from the annual poverty indicators survey (APIS) and other sources, the leading causes of vulnerability among the poor are natural disasters, unexpected reduction of income, and lack of savings.

Filipinos are social, fun loving and friendly people. This was supported by the findings of this study revealing that most of the respondents Agree that they like to entertain people and make them happy. The same data provided that the respondents also enjoy making friends. Filipinos are the most sociable people in the world, as per a global study in 2014 by UM, a key global agency within the IPG Mediabrands. This was also validated by this study revealing that the respondents Agree they like to entertain people and make them happy.

Notably, most of the respondents disclosed that they feel happy when they recall their childhood days. However, there are also a remarkable number of respondents, who Agree that they are at times, feeling very depressed. The connections between childhood events and the impact of those events on adult adjustment are derived from the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud. Freud's theory argues that there are risk factors in childhood that largely impact psychological development in adulthood, including psychopathology (Freud 1996).

The social functioning status of the respondents in terms of Energy indicates that they are mostly undecided in all the provided indicators rated as Uncertain. The highest mean score, however, implies that most of the respondents are uncertain as to whether they feel they are overworked. This was also supported by the fact that majority of the respondents are also undecided if they feel too tired to work or too tired to enjoy life.

The findings show that the respondents generally Agree that they are concerned about the health of their family. In the aspect of health, the respondents rated Agree. Six of 10 Filipinos who succumb to sickness die without ever seeing a doctor, according to the University of the Philippines, National Health Institute (Health Care Beyond Reach for Poor by Kirsten Bernabe, Philippine Daily Inquirer 2010).

The data show that the respondents are Uncertain when asked if they feel disappointed by the people they trust. When the respondents were asked, if they like to have more power of influence over others, they Disagreed. The over-all mean score indicates that the respondents Disagreed about conditions relating to their Environmental Interactions.

The respondents tended to Disagree when asked if they have a vice. Likewise, they are not inclined to drink alcohol or smoke cigarette. The findings from a recent study in 2014 by PhilCare Wellness Index showed that many Filipinos are still into vices and they consume an average of only 5.9 cigarette sticks and 6.57 units of alcohol a week. However, the same study found that this is actually a decrease in the average vice consumption and this is attributed to RA 10351 or the Sin Tax Law that imposed higher tax rates on tobacco and alcohol products which resulted in costlier cigarettes and liquors.

The respondents Strongly Agree that their life was worth all the struggle. This supports the fact that though they are poor, they maintain a positive outlook in life. Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism. Benefits may include increased life span, lower rates of depression, lower levels of distress, better psychological and physical well-being, better coping skills during hardships and times of stress (The Mayo clinic 2014).

This study also determined the perceived needs of impoverished families by selecting from a list of possible interventions which can be provided to poor families that may contribute to their social functioning. For the poor families, Health and Nutritional Services was the most favored intervention, where most of the respondents Strongly Agreeing that this is their most important need at this time. Despite some successes and important progress in some areas, the

Philippines' health sector remains barred by problems of inequity, even after successive waves of reform, from primary health care decentralization to the more recent health sector reform agenda. An independent and dominant private health systems management and the absence of an integrated curative and preventive network together have had a negative impact on economic and geographic access, quality, and efficiency of health services (Assessment of the Health System. WHO 2012). The provision of food assistance/allowances ranked second with most of the poor families Agreeing that this is another important need that should be prioritized. Stress debriefing in the form of family outings or character building got the lowest mean score, nevertheless, it still implies that the respondents have an agreeable response. The overall mean signifies that most of the respondents Agree that the different kinds of intervention identified if provided to these poor families, may contribute to the enhancement of their social functioning.

The findings from this study revealed that there is no significant difference between the social functioning status of poor families and their profile variables.

There is a significant difference as regards the perceived needs when the respondents are grouped according to current employment status and sex. For age, civil status, highest educational attainment, family income, number of dependent children, and membership with any poverty alleviation program, there is no significant difference.

A significant relationship exists between perceived needs and the several aspects of social functioning namely Home and Family Life, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. For variables such as Parenting, Finance, Social Relation and Outlook in Life, Energy, Health, Environmental Interaction, and Habits, thus, the null hypothesis is likewise accepted proving that no significant relationship exists between these variables and the perceived needs of the respondents. The data proved that indeed, a significant relationship exists between social functioning and perceived needs of the poor. Though described to be low, this data only supports the fact that a significant relationship between social functioning status and perceived needs of poor families exists, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the social functioning of individuals is definitely affected by the unmet needs of these poor families.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

A significant relationship exists between social functioning status and the perceived needs of impoverished families in Olongapo City. The perceived needs of poor families are crucial indicators in determining the social functioning of the respondents and these needs should likewise be considered in developing a holistic localized poverty alleviation program that is responsive to the needs of poor families. These perceived needs should be considered in developing and planning for a more holistic poverty alleviation program, that not only addresses poverty condition but also improves the coping mechanisms of the poor, in other words, their social functioning.

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